



Herbs For Healing Newsletter



Herb of the month of June: **Horsetail**

Never have I seen as much horsetail growing in one place as at the Coldharbour allotment in Salisbury.

Curse or blessing? Weed or medicinal herb? The answer is all of these and more.

Horsetail is a living fossil, a prehistoric plant. It has been growing on our planet for over 400 million years. It has a perennial rootstock that reaches up to 2 meters below the ground.

Horsetail can be used as a plant food for tomatoes and many other plants. Mix it with nettles and

comfrey leaves for a particularly potent brew that can be diluted with water in the watering can and applied frequently.

Horsetail strengthens the cell membrane in plant cells, which makes it more difficult for garden pests to get into the plant and weaken it.

No other plant contains as much silica as horsetail. It absorbs this mineral from the earth. The young plant has the highest amount of silica.



The medicinal qualities of silica

Silica facilitates the absorption of calcium by the human body, both of these minerals are necessary for teeth, bones, hair, nails and other connective tissues like tendons and ligaments.

It is a valuable herb for preventing or slowing down osteoporosis, a condition where bones become brittle and breaks down too fast.

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Can horsetail be used as a medicine?

Silica in horsetail strengthens all connective tissues in the body. It is specifically used to treat incontinence because it strengthens the sphincter muscle of the bladder.

As a mild diuretic it can be used to deal with urinary problems such as bladder and kidney infections.

Since horsetail increases elasticity of connective tissue it can be very helpful in preventing and healing chapped skin on the fingers and hands. Use it as a decoction or bathe your hands in it.

When kidneys function better in eliminating normal waste products, the health of many other areas of the body, in turn, improve.

This, I believe, is the reason why the famous Swiss herbalist Abbe Kuenzle stated: **'all pain caused by rheumatism, gout and nerves would disappear...'** if everyone drank a cup of Horsetail tea every day.



Plant Biomechanics Group Freiburg <http://www.uni-freiburg.de/>

Horsetail is a powerful mending plant because it supplies the body with the building blocks to mend itself more effectively.

It also strengthens the lung tissue in cases of a history of tuberculosis or pneumonia. Each infection in the lungs leads to fibrous scar tissue which reduces elasticity. The lung tissue needs to be elastic to function well.

Horsetail as a tea?

Horsetail makes a tea which doesn't actually taste unpleasant.



It needs to be boiled for at least 15 minutes to bring out the silica, but if you drink this decoction and it can help with a variety of health conditions.

How to make a decoction

1 teaspoonful of fresh or dried horsetail to one mug of water, bring to boil and simmer for 15 or 20 minutes.

If possible leave the horsetail in cold water over night and then boil it. Drink one or 2 mugs every day for a

couple of weeks and then stop because it could irritate the kidneys long term.

Use horsetail decoction as a footbath for sweaty feet and chilblains, as a hair rinse for dandruff and for fuller hair.

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Sturminster Newton**

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stur.transitiontown1@googlemail.com

www.transitiontownsturminsternewton.wordpress.com



Luzia Barclay DBTh MIRCH
Registered Medical Herbalist

Salisbury Herbal Practice
54 Hamilton Road
Salisbury SP1 3TQ

Telephone: 01722 330663

Email: info@luzia.co.uk

Site: www.herbsforhealing.org.uk